AMENDMENTS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended) A system useful in stabilizing a vessel, the vessel including a first leg, a second leg, a third leg, and a platform coupled to the first, second, and third legs, the system comprising:

a first brace coupled to the first leg at a first location along the first brace, the first brace forming an acute angle with the first leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the first brace at a second location along the first brace, the first and second locations along the first brace defining a first brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the first brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

5. (Amended) The system of claim 2, wherein the anchoring structure include the first brace.

9. (Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein one or more racks are secured to the first leg, and wherein the anchoring structure includes a ring coupled to the platform, the ring having a holding rack configured to engage one of the one or more racks.

13. (Amended) The system of claim 1, further comprising:

a second brace coupled to the first leg at a first location along the second brace, the second brace forming an acute angle with the first leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the second brace at a second location along the second brace, the first and second locations along the second brace defining a second brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the second brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

15. (Amended) The system of claim 13, further comprising:

a third brace coupled to the first leg at a first location along the third brace, the third brace forming an acute angle with the first leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the third brace at a second location along the third brace, the first and second locations along the third brace defining a third brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the third brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

17. (Amended) The system of claim 1, further comprising:

a second brace coupled to the second leg at a first location along the second brace, the second brace forming an acute angle with the second leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the second brace at a second location along the second brace, the first and second locations along the second brace defining a second brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the second brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

19. (Amended) The system of claim 17, further comprising:

a third brace coupled to the second leg at a first location along the third brace, the third brace forming an acute angle with the second leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the third brace at a second location along the third brace, the first and second locations along the third brace defining a third brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the third brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

21. (Amended) The system of claim 19, further comprising:

a fourth brace coupled to the second leg at a first location along the fourth brace, the fourth brace forming an acute angle with the second leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the fourth brace at a second location along the fourth brace, the first and second locations along the fourth brace defining a fourth brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the fourth brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

22. (Amended) The system of claim 17, further comprising:

a third brace coupled to the third leg at a first location along the third brace, the third brace forming an acute angle with the third leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the third brace at a second location along the third brace, the first and second locations along the third brace defining a third brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the third brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

24. (Amended) The system of claim 22, further comprising:

a fourth brace coupled to the third leg at a first location along the fourth brace, the fourth brace forming an acute angle with the third leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the fourth brace at a second location along the fourth brace, the first and second locations along the fourth brace defining a fourth brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the fourth brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

26. (Amended) The system of claim 24, further comprising:

a fifth brace coupled to the third leg at a first location along the fifth brace, the fifth brace forming an acute angle with the third leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the fifth brace at a second location along the fifth brace, the first and second locations along the fifth brace defining a fifth brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the fifth brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

27. (Amended) The system of claim 22, the vessel further having a fourth leg, and the system further comprising:

a fourth brace coupled to the fourth leg at a first location along the fourth brace, the fourth brace forming an acute angle with the fourth leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the fourth brace at a second location along the fourth brace, the first and second locations along the fourth brace defining a fourth brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the fourth brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

28. (Amended) The system of claim 27, the vessel further having a fifth leg, and the system further comprising:

a fifth brace coupled to the fifth leg at a first location along the fifth brace, the fifth brace forming an acute angle with the fifth leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the fifth brace at a second location along the fifth brace, the first and second locations along the fifth brace defining a fifth brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the fifth brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

29. (Amended) The system of claim 28, the vessel further having a sixth leg, and the system further comprising:

a sixth brace coupled to the sixth leg at a first location along the sixth brace, the sixth brace forming an acute angle with the sixth leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the sixth brace at a second location along the sixth brace, the first and second locations along the sixth brace defining a sixth brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the sixth brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

40. (Amended) A vessel comprising:

a platform;

three legs coupled to the platform such that the platform may be raised or lowered along the three legs;

a flexible brace coupled to each of the three legs at a first location along each flexible brace, each flexible brace forming an acute angle with its respective leg;

an anchoring structure coupled to each flexible brace at a second location along each flexible brace, the first and second locations along each flexible brace defining a flexible brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of each flexible brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

52. (Amended) The vessel of claim 40, further comprising:

a fourth leg coupled to the platform such that the platform may be raised or lowered along the four legs; and

a fourth brace coupled to the fourth leg at a first location along the fourth brace, the fourth brace forming an acute angle with the fourth leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the fourth brace at a second location along the fourth brace, the first and second locations along the fourth brace defining a fourth brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the fourth brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

53. (Amended) The vessel of claim 52, further comprising:

a fifth leg coupled to the platform such that the platform may be raised or lowered along the five legs; and

a fifth brace coupled to the fifth leg at a first location along the fifth brace, the fifth brace forming an acute angle with the fifth leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the fifth brace at a second location along the fifth brace, the first and second locations along the fifth brace defining a fifth brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the fifth brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

54. (Amended) A method useful in stabilizing a vessel, the vessel having a platform and three or more legs coupled to the platform such that platform may be raised or lowered along the legs, the method comprising:

coupling a first brace to one of the legs;

orienting the first brace at an acute angle with the leg to which it is coupled; and

positioning at least a portion of the first brace directly beneath the platform.

70. (Amended) The method of claim 54, further comprising:

coupling a second brace to one of the other two legs;

orienting the second brace at an acute angle with the leg to which it is coupled; and

positioning at least a portion of the second brace directly beneath the platform.

71. (Amended) The method of claim 70, further comprising:

coupling a third brace to the third leg;

orienting the third brace at an acute angle with the third; and

positioning at least a portion of the third brace directly beneath the platform.

72. (Amended) The method of claim 71, wherein the vessel includes a fourth leg coupled to the platform such that the platform may be raised or lowered along the four legs, the method further comprising:

coupling a fourth brace to the fourth leg;

orienting the fourth brace at an acute angle with the fourth leg; and

positioning at least a portion of the fourth brace directly beneath the platform.

Please add the following new claims:

82. (New) The vessel of claim 40, wherein an anchoring structure to which one of the braces is coupled includes another leg, such that that brace is coupled to one of the three legs and to an anchoring structure that includes another of the three legs.

83. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein the anchoring structure includes another leg, such that the first brace is coupled to one of the legs and to an anchoring structure that includes another of the three legs.

84. (New) A vessel comprising:

a platform;

three legs coupled to the platform such that the platform may be raised or lowered along the three legs;

a footing structure coupled to an end of one of the legs; and

a flexible brace coupled at two different locations to the leg with the footing structure, the flexible brace forming an acute angle with that leg, and one of the two locations being on the footing structure.

Please replace the originally-filed drawings with the enclosed formal drawings.

REMARKS

A. Status of the Claims

Claims 1-81 were filed. The Office issued a restriction requirement on August 12, 2002, identifying claims 1-29 and 40-72 as Group I, claims 30-39 as Group II, and claims 73-81 as Group III. In response, Applicant elected Group I without traverse. As a result, claims 1-29 and